



Peter Anderson, who almost scored for the town in the opening minute, shows the danger which could come from a player closing in fast from the wing.

Not much went right for the Town

COLCHESTER UTD 1,
LUTON TOWN 0

THE Town will not look back with much pleasure on their first venture in the Watney Cup, and they have probably been reflecting that things could scarcely have run more wrongly for them, just when they wanted a prestige-boosting victory.

And that had nothing to do with the fact that football's top brass was lined up at Layer Road for a view of the experiment in the offside law—which proved to be almost a non-event, so little impact did it make.

Leaving aside that, the fact is that the Town, without enlisting the advantages that the new rule was supposed to bring, did so well in the opening stages that they threatened to make a one-horse race of it.

Valuable save

Probably, Smith will not make a more valuable save all season than the one that came in the first minute, when Anderson streamed through, and the goalkeeper, some way out of his goal, turned the ball over.

A goal then and the Town would have been well on their way and they had another chance when Busby could do no better than shoot against Burgess from close in.

First cloud on the horizon came in the eighth minute when Givens, who had been showing liveliness and speed, was brought down by a scything tackle that produced a free-kick. Strangely, in view of events to follow, there was no admonition of the player concerned.

Givens went off for attention outside the touchline, resumed with a limp, was soon able to test Smith, and then shoot wildly over from a good position.

With 24 minutes gone, Givens was hurt again, but returned to go close to putting the Town ahead with a header which, it was said

afterwards, struck Anderson when Smith was in no sort of position to save.

However, the handicap of a heavy limp was too much for him and, with 31 minutes gone, he disappeared from

LINE-UP

COLCHESTER UNITED: Smith; Cram, Owen (Leslie); Gilchrist, Garvey, Burgess; Lewis, Crawford, Gibbs, Simmons (Jones), Mahon.

LUTON TOWN: Read; John Ryan, Slough; Hoy, Nicholl, Moore; Anderson, Court (Goodeve), Givens (Wainwright), Busby, Keen.

Referee: N. C. Burtenshaw, Great Yarmouth. Attendance: 8,186.

the scene completely. With him, in my opinion, went the Town's main chance to qualify for the semi-final.

Substitute for him was Wainwright, a player for whom much has been predicted for some time, and I am told that he has been playing splendidly in trial games.

However, teamed up as a striker with Busby, who was not at his best, Wainwright found the close marking and hard tackling of the home defence too much for him, and made little impression.

Hoy booked

Just before Givens left, Hoy had been booked for throwing the ball away, before a free-kick, presumably to give him time in which to tie his bootlace.

In view of what had happened to Givens without retribution to the player concerned, I find this harsh treatment, especially as it was Hoy's third booking this year, and he now faces an appearance before the Disciplinary Committee.

Another name to go into the referee's book was that of Court for a tackle from behind on Mahon, and that was the keynote on which a goalless first half ended.

Such danger as had come from Colchester had been through the agency of long punts into the goalmouth, but Read had not been tested anything like so severely as that very capable performer Smith.

The Town had been tending to lose their grip in midfield, mainly through the tremendous amount of ground their middle three

had to cover. This was aggravated by the fact that the front-runners found increasing difficulty in mounting sustained pressure.

Most danger came when John Ryan began to perform the overlap, which served to emphasise the fact that the new system was simply crying out for more use of the extreme wings by either side.

In the 73rd minute came three substitutions. Owen, formerly of Watford, who had played a brave part, and Simmons, were superseded in the Colchester side by Leslie and Jones, and the Town brought on Goodeve for Court.

In my book, Court had been the most effective of the Town's midfield men, certainly using the ball with accuracy, and he had covered much more ground than is usually necessary.

Slough moved into his midfield place, with Goodeve taking over at left-back and that proved fatal to the Town's hopes—though, at the same time, it was most unfortunate for the former Manchester United defender.

In the 78th minute he made a slightly late tackle on Lewis who, as we know from his stay at Luton, is never one to minimise the effects of anything like that near the penalty area.

Lewis went down like a log, remained spreadeagled on the ground, but was up blithely enough when it became plain that a penalty had been awarded.

In fact, LEWIS took it himself, sending Read diving to his left which, unfortunately, happened to be the wrong direction.

Lost grip

After that, the Town threw everything into attack, but they just had not sufficient penetration and drive to give themselves a chance of survival.

Certainly, it was an unfortunate way in which to go out of the competition, but the game did serve to emphasise points of weakness of which they were already aware.

Outstanding in their ranks were John Ryan, who had a splendid match; Nicholl, despite being drawn out of the middle on occasion; Slough, and in the first half, Anderson.